

## **Tips for Saving on Voice Telecommunications Costs**

Every agency should have business processes in place to perform a periodic review of their telecommunications costs. As the head of your agency, have you addressed the following related to your telecommunication costs?

- *Long Distance* - All employees who use long distance should review actual usage monthly for correctness and to assure calls were made for official state business.
- *Inventory of services* - Perform a quarterly or semi-annual review of your agency's inventory of telecommunications services to verify that each service is associated with a specific staff person or application. If the use of a service cannot be verified with records, further investigation is warranted.
- *Lowest Cost Alternative* - Verify that your agency does not subscribe to services that cost more in a specific location of the state than necessary. Example: If Voice Centrex service is available at a site, it is usually less expensive than installing an analog business line.
- *Cell Phones* - Cellular phone usage has grown significantly over the past few years. An important factor in controlling cellular phone costs is ensuring a user's cellular plan matches closely the actual pattern of usage. VITA has developed a Web-based tool to assist agencies in analyzing their cellular bills and recommend optimum plans based on usage patterns. To learn more about the tool, visit the VITA Website:  
<http://www.vita.virginia.gov/services/voiceServices/cellular/webCellularTool.cfm>
- *Telecommunications Audit* - VITA has recently contracted with ASYNCROB, Inc. to provide a telecommunications inventory audit service to state agencies. ASYNCROB consultants can come into an agency and perform a review of all telecommunications inventory and identify unnecessary services or service billing errors. The service is contingency fee-based. (If ASYNCROB finds billing errors, they receive 20 percent of the error as their fee. If they recommend changes to telecommunications services that result in "future savings," and the agency implements the changes, ASYNCROB receives 16.85 percent of "future savings" for a maximum of 90 days.) VITA is currently conducting a pilot of this service with the Department of Transportation, the Department of Forestry, and the Department of Aviation. The pilot will evaluate the costs and benefits of using the service to quantify its net benefit to the state. Findings from the pilot should be available by July 2004.

If your agency has questions about any of these cost-savings tips, or if you need assistance in evaluating service alternatives, call Pam Seay in VITA's voice engineering group at 804-692-0716, or e-mail her at [pam.seay@vita.virginia.gov](mailto:pam.seay@vita.virginia.gov)